

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The recommendations of the Department related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Commerce headed by Shri I.K. Gujral and the Commission on Review of Administrative Laws have proposed that the work relating to the development of cardamom be entrusted to the Ministry of Agriculture. The recommendation are under consideration.

(c) and (d) Yes, Sir. Cardamom growers have represented against the proposal and have requested that work relating to development of cardamom should remain with the Spices Board. The Government are considering this aspect also.

FDI In Plantation Companies

* 14. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY:

SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to allow seventy-four per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in plantation companies;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, particularly when plantation is not a priority sector; and

(c) the steps, if any, taken to safeguard the interests of workers of tea and coffee plantation and processing companies which are highly labour-intensive?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) No, Sir.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Impact of Import Quota Removals

*15. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made a study of the impact quota removals by April, 2001 on various segments of the economy;

(b) if so, what are the findings thereof; and

(c) what measures are being taken to ensure that India's farmers and

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industry, particularly small industry, do not face unfair competition after the dismantling of import quotas?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) to (c) Government is absolutely determined to ensure through appropriate use of the tariff and other mechanisms that imports do not cause any serious detriment or injury to the domestic industry or to agriculture due to import quota removals by April 2001. Towards that end, Government has increased duties on a number of items where a surge in imports was noticed or apprehended, for example, the duties on arecanut has been raised to 100%. on poultry products to 100%, on wheat to 50%, on skimmed milk powder to 60%, on apple to 50%, on edible oils to 35% and on rice to 80%. India's tariff bindings at WTO for most of the agricultural items are fairly high and effective rates of customs duties can be raised to those levels, in case there is any evidence of substantial increase in imports.

Government has also decided to constitute an Inter-Ministerial Group to study the impact of removal of quantitative restrictions.

Besides, a Group of Ministers has been entrusted with the task of suggesting ways and means for empowering the SSI sector. Their recommendations are awaited.

Ill-effect of TV serials

†*16, SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH:
DR. D. MASTHAN:

Will the Minister of INFORMATION AND BROADCASTING be pleased to state;

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn towards the news, item captioned "T.V Serial was his undoing" published in The Hindustan Times, dated 1st July, 2000;

(b) if so, whether it is a fact that serials being telecast by electronic media are contributing to the increase in crimes in the society; and

(c) if not, what is the reaction of Government and what steps have been taken by Government to save the society from such ill-effects in future?

† Original notice of the question not received in Hindi